Blogging for fun and profit

- or at least access and potential profit
Where are you at?

or

http://goo.gl/w9yt6
Hope attendees didn’t take profit too seriously…more about:

- Profit of promotion (importance, loyalty)
- Use of resources generates income
- SROI (social return on investment - business lingo!)
Collections Up Close - the blog

www.mnhs.org/collectionsupclose
Blogging old news?

Maybe...but this presentation is meant to:

• Codify why an organization should want to do it

• Consider it an anchor for other new technologies
  o QR codes
  o Video podcasts
  o Screen casts
  o Digitization projects

• Remind people that it is direct access to the public
NEED TO KNOW - THE BIG THREE

1. Have a goal
   • What do you want?
   • Who is the audience?

2. Plan for execution
   • How will you accomplish?
   • What tools?

3. Plan for evaluation
   • How will you know if you succeeded?
   • How will you communicate to others?
Why did we start a blog? - GOALS

- Bring attention to our work
  - promote what we do

- Let people know about resources
  - access

- How to use them
  - education
Remember when auto travel was romantic? Neither do we; so it was nice last month when a donor walked into the library with a reminder. Glenn Jaglowski brought us a pamphlet prepared by the Conoco Company in 1936 especially for his father, Alexander. The Jaglowski family lived in Hibbing, Minnesota and wanted to take a car camping trip to Glacier and Yellowstone Parks. Having a membership in the Conoco Travel Club allowed the Jaglowskis to request Conoco’s Travel Bureau to create a “Touraide,” an itinerary that included every piece of information they would need along the way. This included maps with highlighted routes, mileage charts, accommodations, narrative and photographic descriptions of the states the Jaglowskis would be traveling through, and perhaps most importantly, the locations of the Conoco gas stations along the way. Rubber stamped updates were added to the maps to warn the family that, for example, certain mountain passes are usually open by May 15th but it would be wise to call ahead and check. Fabulously, the donated Touraide included the triangular car window sticker identifying the Jaglowskis as Conoco Travel Club members. I have no doubt that they received an extra big smile from the gas station attendant while their gas was being pumped for them.

Patrick Coleman, Acquisitions Librarian
CONTACT AT A DISTANCE: 3D MODELS OF COLLECTIONS

There’s nothing quite like handling a historic artifact. Turning over an object in your hands, tracing its shape and testing its weight, you’re free to focus on any detail that grabs your interest, from the lace on a debutante’s glove to the rust on a blacksmith’s tongs. You can hold it out at arm’s length to see how it reflects light at different angles, then pull it in close to examine surface details. Handling an object offers an immediate sense of how it was used by its owners, and of its function (or lack of function) in everyday life. Above all, it creates intimacy—a kind of communion between person and thing that can inspire curiosity, empathy, and awe.

Connecting people and things in an intimate way is one of the core duties of history museums. But for most institutions, letting visitors handle more than a carefully-chosen silver of their artifact collections isn’t practical. Frequent handling can damage an object in a matter of days. And even the sturdiest relics are out of reach for would-be handlers who live too far away to visit them.

What, then, can museums do to recreate the miracle of contact at a distance? To encourage handling without the wear-and-tear? Digital photographs in online catalogs do a great deal, but they have limits. Take this picture of a Dakota tobacco pouch, for example.

3D models of each of these objects are now available via Collections Online, a searchable database of MHS artifacts. Opening a model on your computer is easy and requires no special software—just a standard PDF viewer like Adobe Reader. Here’s what to do.
How to use - education
AUDIENCE!

Think of your audience as you develop:

- **Site**
  - Layout
  - Tools - WordPress

- **Topics and individual posts**
  - What do they want to know? What is of interest?

- **Voice**
  - Style - authoritative, chatty, serious, fun?
How we do it - PLAN

• Communicate goal - Get department on board
• Pick and learn tool to use
• Determine Frequency of updates
• Identify topics
Create Logic Model

• Inputs
  o Collections – books, papers, objects, art, photographs
  o Curators - knowledge, writing, research abilities
  o Photos or scans of item
  o Posting – place, know-how, regularity

• Activities
  o Come up with idea to share on web site
  o Write
  o Photograph or scan
  o Edit
  o Post
  o Promote – social media, regular media, Wikipedia, to interested groups
Create - Logic Model - continued

• Output
  o How many get posted per month
  o How many views in a given time/over time
  o How shared

• Outcomes
  o Increase knowledge of collection
  o Increase knowledge of MN history
  o Increase knowledge of what we do/how/why
  o Increase access and use of materials
Finding audience - PROMOTE

Now that it exists, how do you get them to come?

- Social Media
  - Facebook
  - Twitter
  - Flickr
  - YouTube
- Promote in like spaces
  - Younger Bros.
- Wikipedia??
PROMOTE - Continued

- Importance of tagging, keywords
  - Downton Abbey shameless plug

Other plugs:
- Frank Lloyd Wright
- Younger Bros.
- Lincoln
Longevity of posts

• Long Tail (business speak!)

"...strategy of selling a large number of unique items with relatively small quantities sold of each – usually in addition to selling fewer popular items in large quantities."
Long tail - what it means for us

• Content will be found long after it's "New"
• Does not negate importance of new content
• New, fresh content will keep visitors coming back
• Legacy (or old) content will help new people find the site through search engines
Home page .......................................................... 198
What a Picture is Worth: The Sadie and Emma Ray Photography Collection ........... 18
28th Virginia Infantry Battle Flag Captured at Gettysburg ................................. 13
Images of the Edmund Fitzgerald ........................................................................... 13
Girl Scout uniform .................................................................................................. 9
The Gun that Wounded John Dillinger .................................................................. 8
Frank Lloyd Wright Arrested in Minnesota! ......................................................... 8
‘Trim Twist, The Executive Exerciser’ .................................................................... 6
Nokomis vessels ...................................................................................................... 6
1925 washing machine ............................................................................................ 6
Minnesota’s First State Flag .................................................................................... 5
US Army General’s Hardee hat ................................................................................ 5
Fergus Falls State Hospital Papers .......................................................................... 5

....and so on with small numbers for a total of 612 on this day
EVALUATE

- Proof of concept
- Build support by showing audience
- Understand what audience wants
- Numbers important, as comments not reliable
- Trends over raw numbers
EVALUATE continue

Examples of growth over time
PROFIT? PROFIT!

• Make actual money from orders
• Encourages Donations
  ▪ know what we're interested in
  ▪ credit
• Use – proving worth
• Loyalty
  ▪ Engagement
  ▪ Excitement
  ▪ Trust
• All of this adds up to SROI - Social Return on Investment
Dangers

• This is a social media space!
  - Always watch comments
  - Respond as needed

• Unintended/unsavory attention
  - Sites you might not want to associate with linking - remove link

• Copyright issues

• Time
  - Remember: this improves communication, but should not take all your time
One last time - THE THREE

Goal
Execution
Evaluation

PLUS, as always...

RE-EVALUATE when necessary!
THANK YOU!

QUESTIONS?

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